

The Developing Child with Unilateral Hearing Loss: LISTENING IN BACKGROUND NOISE

 Hearing 'through' noise People have 2 ears to help them locate sound and also to help listen in noise. Without even being aware of it we use both ears when we are listening in noise by pointing one ear a bit more to the person we are trying to listen to and the other ear a bit more toward the noise. Our heads actually help to block out a bit of the noise so the one ear can 'tune in' better to the speaker or preferred sound.	Listening in noise with one ear Children with only one normal hearing ear have greater difficulty locating where sounds are coming from and understanding speech or recognizing sounds when there is competing noise. Children with one hearing ear will need <u>more time</u> to locate sounds and it will take <u>more effort</u> to focus on sounds in background noise. They are more likely to '<u>tune out</u>' in noise. 
Background noise scenario 1 Mama is doing dishes and Marie is on the kitchen floor playing with plastic containers and a large wooden spoon. Except for when she is running water, mama talks about the big dish and the little dish; the red top and the green top; the spoon going bang, bang - providing the language that describes what Marie is interested in at the moment. 	Background noise scenario 2 Mama is doing dishes and Marie is on the kitchen floor playing with plastic containers and a large wooden spoon. Mama is running water, and the television is on. Mama tells Marie to play. Marie soon stops in a few minutes and Mama wonders why she bothered getting out things for Marie to play with. 
Background noise scenario 3 Mama is doing dishes and the television is on. Marie is on the kitchen floor playing with plastic containers and a large wooden spoon. Mama tells Marie to play with the dishes. Marie soon stops playing and crawls away toward a house plant. Mama tells her to not touch. Marie pulls the plant. Mama rushes over and tells her she is a bad girl. Marie tuned out in background noise. She had no warning before seeing Mama mad. 	How 'far' can a child hear?  It depends! How interested is the child in the sound? How much background noise? She may hear the cookie jar opening from the next room because she loves cookies. He may not seem to hear when spoken to from the same room if he is very interested in what he is doing. BUT children with only one ear do not hear as well as children who have 2 ears that work together. What can you hear right now? How 'far' can you hear? What would be the size of your Listening Bubble right now? What do you think would happen if it was quiet? Noisy?

SUGGESTED FOR HOME VISIT 2